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AMEMBASSY MEXICO PASS AMCONSUL MONTERREY

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SUBJECT: CONFERENCE CALL TO MEXICO BRINGS CUBAN YOUTH
TOGETHER

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Classified By: COM Michael Parmly for Reason 1.4(d).

¶1. (S) Summary: Leaders of two Cuban pro-democracy youth groups took part in a USG-facilitated teleconference October 17 with university students in Monterrey, Mexico. At the Havana end, at the PAO Residence, 25 young Cubans took part, mainly from the Marti Youth Coalition (CJM) but also from Young People Without Censorship (JSC). At Consulate Monterrey were 10 students from Universidad Regiomontana and Tecnologico de Monterrey, at least one of whom had previously met with CJM members in Havana. In a lively conference call that lasted 30 minutes (until the phone line somehow went dead), discussion covered such topics as the importance of peaceful activism, the lack of recreational facilities in Cuba and the unavailability of affordable books. The gathering marked the first time in recent memory that Cuban youth groups had convened to address their counterparts off-island. After the event, many of the Havana participants called for follow-up meetings between Cuban youth groups, and talk was buzzing of possible cooperation. We have stepped up our interaction with opposition youth groups and are planning other events aimed at helping them find common ground. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Two dozen Cuban pro-democracy activists aged 18-38, from the CJM, JSC and other organizations, met at the PAO residence October 17 and participated in a teleconference with 10 Monterrey university students. CJM Vice President Edgar Lopez led his group's delegation, while Ahmed Rodriguez Albacia represented the JSC. Also present were young members of non-youth organizations, including the Democracy Party Pedro Luis Boitel and Opposition for a New Republic. The CJM, whose stated goal is to "promote a space for alternative (civic) participation," thanked the Mexicans for their solidarity and told them the CJM is trying to fill the void created by an ideologically intolerant system. Other participants criticized GOC censorship, political incarcerations, high book prices, the lack of economic opportunities, and the paucity of recreational facilities.

MARTI YOUTH COALITION

¶3. (C) The Marti Youth Coalition (CJM), named after Cuban poet and patriot Jose Marti, was formed in March 2005 and claims to have 300 members across the island, and to be

growing quickly. (Note: USINT Havana is aware of dozens of active CJM members. The group's founder, Marco de Miranda, now lives in Miami. End Note.) The CJM sees itself as an alternative to the older, what it sees as calcified pro-democracy groups and to the regime-controlled Communist Youth League (UJC). "The Government and the opposition have gotten old," says Lopez, adding that many UJC members belong to that group not out of ideological fealty but for access to perks.

YOUNG PEOPLE WITHOUT CENSORSHIP

¶4. (C) Young People Without Censorship (JSC), meanwhile, is a much smaller organization. JSC, technically an independent news agency, is less than two years old and consists of 12 core members, spread out across the island. JSC focuses on such issues as prison conditions and homeless migrants who erect makeshift shacks. The JSC claims to be growing quickly. Its reputation got a boost in September when Paris-based Reporters Without Borders condemned Ahmed Rodriguez Albacia's detention.

SEPARATE EVENT HELD OCTOBER 13

¶5. (S) The JSC has warm ties with the Cuban Youth Movement for Democracy, headed by Nestor Rodriguez Lobaina. On October 13, USINT organized a DVC between the Movement and the Miami-based Cuban Democratic Directory. It was the first (virtual) face-to-face meeting between the youth group and some of its long-time supporters.

COMMENT

¶6. (S) USINT has stepped up its interaction with opposition youth groups and is planning further events, some with

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contemporaries overseas. Pro-democracy youth groups have their share of differences, but nowhere near as many, or as serious, as in the larger, older human rights community, where ten-year-old grudges are common and as damaging as GOC penetration. We will try to provide venues and opportunities at which key youth groups like the CJM, JSC and Movement can communicate and share ideas with each other and/or with sympathetic audiences in other cities in the region.
PARMLY